

NSC BRIEFING

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EXECUTIONS MARK END OF "100 FLOWERS" LIBERALIZATION IN COMMUNIST CHINA

- I. Mao Tse-tung's "hundred flowers" campaign, designed to encourage constructive criticism of Chinese Communist regime, has come to an actual, if not an official, end with the first execution of a "critic."
- A. On 6 September the Chinese announced the execution of three leaders of a student riot in Hanyang last June.
- B. This is harshest move thus far in expanding campaign against "rightist" critics of the regime. Executions reportedly took place at mass meeting of 10,000.
- II. Timing suggests move is intended primarily as special warning to students, now returning to school all over China.
- A. Since early this year Peiping has been uneasy over disaffection among students--a key support group--and has ordered intensified indoctrination.
- III. Significance of executions will not be lost on other dissidents, however, and will remove any doubts which may remain regarding the regime's willingness to deal summarily with critics who do not yield to "persuasion"--prescribed by Mao for those discontented with Communist policies.
- A. Peiping's news reports identify Hanyang rioters with non-Communist Cabinet officials lately attacked for criticizing the Communist Party and government.
- IV. Peiping probably wishes to avoid mass terror if possible and is still calling officially for constructive criticism. There

is unlikely to be much now.